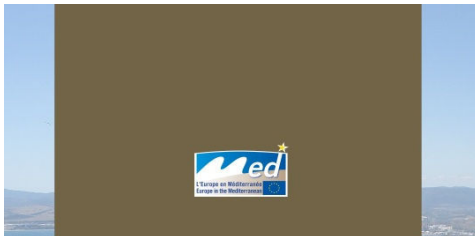


Money isn't a problem

The current financial framework for Mediterranean Regions in a macroregional perspective



Money isn't a problem

Is it possible to construct a financial strategy for a Mediterranean macro region?



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As a deliverable of the MEDGOV project, this document attempts to contribute to the accomplishment of the discussion about the realisation of the Mediterranean macro region, approaching it in a new way. In fact, considering the complex political situation of the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and the limits of the current debate about EU cohesion policy, it looks likely that the financial patterns and the available future tools for the Mediterranean sea and its regions will not undergo any revolutionary change, and therefore we should wonder what we could do from tomorrow, with those resources and with those tools.

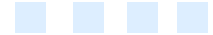
This document tries precisely to answer these questions, avoiding to confuse the macroregion with currently ongoing transnational cooperation and cross-border cooperation programmes, using the resources already available in the 2007-2013 programming period for cohesion policies, and referring to the ideas contained in the "Barca Report" and in the conclusions of the "Fifth Cohesion Report". Due to the profound fragmentation of available resources for the Mediterranean basin in the EU programming, very often the actors that manage those resources often lose the general dimension of them, and since a unique, real place

of individualisation of the priorities of the basin (not even only in its European shore) does not exist, we have to consider all resources from the cohesion policies, and which interest the Mediterranean basin and its sub-areas, and we have to analyse and integrate these resources in the various possible scenarios.

Negotiations involving the Mediterranean basin are often characterised by a specific request for additional resources devoted to this important macro regional area of cohesion, but in fact, in this area, the lines of expenditure are numerous, and the amount of available resources related to programmes strategically linked to the objectives of cohesion and development of the Mediterranean as a whole exceeds 61 billion € (a figure significantly higher than that concerning other sea basins of the European Union). And if we consider the mesoregional areas (Western Mediterranean, Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean) it becomes clear how the allocation of operational programmes' resources undoubtedly favours the Western Mediterranean mesoregion.

The redistribution of resources in the Mediterranean area

The financial resources spent in the Mediterranean, and ascribable to EU cohesion policy, are, substantially, managed with the essential contribution of the regions, that participate in different forms to the definition of national development strategies, and that also manage a substantial portion of regional cohesion policies. Although the regions play a less prominent role in the effective management of the Mediterranean multilateral cross-border cooperation programmes, for obvious problems of institutional balance (the low development of political and administrative decentralisation in the countries of the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean prevents the creation of effective forums that could include, on the one hand, regional institutions, and on the other, national representatives) the regional system holds the actual strategic and operational governance of most of the resources devoted to the Mediterranean basin, and that are related to EU cohesion policies. Moreover, thanks to a decision shared at the interstate level, one region (Sardinia) plays the role of Managing Authority of the multi-lateral, cross-border Mediterranean programme.

**The potential of the current situation**

if we want to analyse how resources are actually redistributed, we see that the main priorities of the operational programmes are Accessibility, Cultural and Environmental Resources, Energy and Sustainable Development, as well as, to a lesser extent, Urban Development. Going into further details at these priorities, we realise that they are very similar, and, paradoxically, suggest that, in different parts of the Mediterranean, very similar projects are being financed, and this evidence is even more apparent if we analyse specifically cross-border programmes, because their territorial coverage is wide, but they concern homogeneous areas in the Mediterranean mesoregions.

The overall picture, therefore, appears to be full of potential (abundant resources, consistent priorities, territories having to deal with similar problems), even though integrate policies struggle to emerge, as shown by the very poor use of the potential for interregional cooperation among the regional programmes ERDF and ESF.

Moreover, as we've already seen, excluding CBC programmes, co-financed by IPA or ENPI resources, States are fundamentally absent, both in the path of programming and during the setting of priorities, and they are little present during the managing phase as well. So one could basically maintain that the amount of resources devoted to cohesion in the area of the Mediterranean basin is under the governance of the regions.

In addition, the program framework is the same, in terms of EU guidelines and strategic direction, and priorities and planning choices in the design of the operational programmes strategically converge, and have, on paper, a strong potential to develop projects that can be integrated.

Having outlined the current situation, it is possible to try to design a planning hypothesis of governance of the cohesion policies for the Mediterranean, taking into account the planning and regulations of the programming period 2007-2013.

An hypothetical integrated operational programme

The resources that are actually available comprehend transnational cooperation programmes, CBC regional programmes, ENPI CBC programmes, IPA Adriatic programmes, and part of the resources (4%) resulting from regional operational programmes, as prescribed in existing regulations.

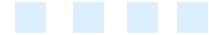
Even focusing solely on this last amount of money, if 4% of every regional ERDF programme were aimed at a joint Mediterranean planning, around 2,2 billion € could be mobilised.

This figure corresponds to about 50% of the potential financial framework, and the remaining 50% could come from a coordinated management – through agreement on priorities, projects and objectives – of territorial cooperation programmes that involve the Mediterranean basin.

Trying to look at the experiment at the meso regional level, namely in the area of the Western Mediterranean, some sort of integrated operational programme could be built: the priorities and the resources of a new operational programme could be designed, a programme resulting from the integration between the Operational Programmes that are already operating in the common basin, and that could finance integrated cohesion projects (this programme, however, would look especially at the cohesion objectives of the Northern shore, and at the integrated competitiveness of the regions involved).

Obviously, this could be done without modifying neither regulations nor the principles for the territorial eligibility of resources, but, simply, acting on the integrated design of projects.

The hypothetical priority axes of this potential operational programme would be: Innovation, Environment and Promotion of a Sustainable Territorial Development, Improvement of Mobility and Territorial Accessibility, Promotion of a Polycentric and Integrated Development in the Med Space, and Technical Assistance.

**A common framework for the Mediterranean**

If, instead, one wanted to integrate all the instruments and all the tools, and try to imagine a common framework for the Mediterranean, the potential would be even greater, and might also involve the Southern and Eastern shores.

Taking into account also the state of the art about possible Med strategies promoted by the regional system, namely most of all the ARLEM proposals and recommendations, highlighted in the “ARLEM report on the territorial dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean – recommendations for the future”, presented in Agadir on January 29, 2011, and the “CPRM Integrated Mediterranean Strategy”, submitted by the General Assembly of the CIM on March 2011, that describes the position of Med Regions, the legal and institutional structure of the strategy, and the Action Plan for an Integrated Mediterranean Strategy, some proposals for the future Mediterranean region could be carried out.

The issues to tackle and the potential for spontaneous integration

First of all, as we have seen, the issues that this area has to tackle are substantially the same, and the variables (administrative, technological, organisational, and institutional) demonstrate that the projects are not very different one from the other. Also the administrative and organisational cultures are very similar, therefore the knowledge of the projects could allow to highlight the potential for spontaneous integration, which arises from the nature of the issues and of the problems faced, and from the organisational and technological optimisation.

Medgov – a European territorial project whose objective is to carry out common regional policies at the Mediterranean level in four key sectors of development, namely innovation, environment, transport and migration and culture – aims at investing in a first experiment of common databases, which ranges over the various operational programmes, trying to highlight the potential of integration and common capitalisation of territorial cooperation programmes, that are those that use the biggest part of the resources. This knowledge, moreover, could facilitate the attainment of a result that today is unexpected: the elaboration of integrated Mediterranean projects, that could be born spontaneously from the simple exploitation of the investments.

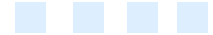
Another proposal could regard the creation of a Euromed Agenda, since, although various attempts have been made, on every level of European planning a clear, simple and identifiable European regional agenda for the Mediterranean does not appear.

A Euromed agenda and virtual macroregion

However, keeping in mind the experience at the origin of the project Medgov, a group of regions strongly committed, and with a certain authority, imitating the suggestion of the “Fifth Cohesion Report”, may be able to propose a Euromed Agenda of reference, and to set it at the basis of a wide discussion, but with the objective to do it inside the regional planning which has been defined from themselves. The Agenda could be a collective product, within the CPRM framework, and may be disclosed by the same regional network, through its ordinary and institutional activity. This exemplary action would tend to build a model of excellence, a guideline, that would strengthen even more the authority of the regions which are adopting this Euromed Agenda, and that would make them stronger inside the national and the European levels.

Another concept to bear in mind could be that of “virtual”, that, even if it is often associated with the concept of evanescent and of ephemeral, considered from an etymological point of view actually identifies the moment in which a thing has the power to be something more, but it is not completely that something yet, something that already has the strength in itself, but still doesn't express it.

For this reason, starting from the “Barca Report”, the “Fifth Cohesion Report” and the “Green Book on Territorial Cohesion”, we think that the building of a serious project and plan of action of a Euromediterranean macroregion could be something more than a simple experimentation. If the Euromed macroregion were duly built (even if limited to a small but committed number of actors, Operational Programmes and projects), starting from the existing planning and priorities, and referring to projects and initiatives to integrate it or to strengthen it, it could become a virtual macroregion, a macroregion that already, in itself, has the strength to be political of cohesion.



In order to make the characteristic of “virtual” a coherent future strength, the macroregion should have three fundamental features:

- at least a common infrastructure,
- at least a common project devoted to the stable coordination of the decision system of the implicated politics, in order to make them effectively feasible at the administrative level,
- at least a project or a tool designed to favour the relationship among the SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) of different regions.

The Leader's network

In a time of heavy decisions and loss of responsibilities, with many negative effects such as the predominance of low profile agreements, and the diffusion of covered interests, a possible solution could also be represented by a Leader's Network, because by enlarging and sharing the network of those responsible, the weight of responsibilities themselves seem to decrease.

A leading group could be established and charged of start-up activities, testing the initial positive effects (this group would tend to be identified by its personal leaders – Leader's Network –), and at least one action able to mobilise, under certain conditions, an appropriate quantity of resources to change the social and economic context towards the proposed orientation should be individuated.

So, generally, the leading group should individuate the action that could generate the critical mass, trying to change the context according to new proposed orientations. In order to have positive and lasting effects, adequate resources must be mobilised, and concentrated on well-specified initiatives, able to influence social behaviours and attitudes in a positive way.

Starting from the Barcelona Global Forum, Medgov project could promote a leader's network through the regional authorities involved.

In conclusion, in all the operational programmes that act in the Mediterranean border regions and systems, the potentialities of the area of the basin are emphasised.

But, as the “Barca Report” shows, in order to build the future development of the European system, it is necessary to invest on a series of “place based” investments, or rather on a sum of collective goods open to be used that enable the territorial system to make the most of the resources that, in perspective, are not adequately exploited.

The strength of the European identity

If this key concept is applied to an interregional and transnational basin system, it could let people identify a series of “collective public goods” on which we could invest to make the territories involved (the basin) more competitive. If we experience this “place based” approach starting from the current planning period, following the indications of the Barca Report, we could identify, among the operational programmes of the same level (regional policies, cross-border policies), at least a common project, a public collective good on which the investments could be integrated.

This action of the Mediterranean regional systems, forcing the Mediterranean multilevel governance, could allow involved actors to verify the conclusions of the Eurobarometer report “European Cultural Values” (both 2006 and 200□). In particular, it locates the strength of the European identity and of its history in the regions and in the nations of the Mediterranean Basin.

Paolo Parrini